

The Kiger House , *SHARPTOWN VICINITY*
(Mannington Township), Salem County, New Jersey

HABS-NJ-445

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of New Jersey

Historic American Buildings Survey
Seymour Williams, F.A.I.A., District Officer
133 Central Avenue, Rahway, New Jersey

The Kiger House
Mannington Township, Salem County, New Jersey

Owner: Truitt Perry

Date of Erection: About 1720

Architect:

Builder: Richard Robinson

Present Condition: Fair

Number of Stories: Brick section two and one-half
stories; in rear two story frame
addition of later date

Materials of Construction: Foundation - stone

Exterior walls - brick,
Flemish bond

Interior walls - plaster

Inside brick chimneys

Roof - pitch

Historical Data:

This house stands on the banks of Salem Creek at a place once known as Goch's Landing. It is supposed to have been erected by Richard Robinson about 1720. The initials R. R. are over the door with the date 1745, but it is known that the Kiger brothers owned the farm at that date.

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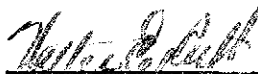
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In this house during the reign of George II when Catholics were forbidden open worship, the first mass was held in Salem County by a Jesuit priest. In the 1740s the house was the recognized Catholic mission of the county, and a large number of French and Belgian glass workers employed at Casper Wistar's met at this house for worship. It is, along with the Shane's Castle at Waterford, Camden County, one of the earliest catholic missions in South Jersey.

Bibliography:

Sickler, J. S. The Old Houses of Salem
County Salem, The Sunbeam Publishing
Company, 1934



Supervising Historian

Approved:



SEYMOUR WILLIAMS, F.A.I.A.
District Officer

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Since our first sketch we have obtained additional evidence which corrects in part the material of the first history. The present owner is Albert P. Bowen of Springfield, Pennsylvania. Truitt Perry is named as the owner in the first account, in this we were following Sickler in The Old Houses of Salem County; however, a search of the title shows that he never was the actual owner. Bowen received his title in 1935 from Hubert P. Layton, sheriff, in foreclosure proceedings against the heirs of Martha Perry. Martha Perry got title in 1889 from the executors of Joseph H. Matlack who had possession from 1884 when the property was deeded by David Sparks, Jr. Sparks received title from George W. Barton, sheriff, in a foreclosure against Adam Kiger. Adam Kiger became the owner in 1845 by deed from Henry Kiger. Henry obtained the property in 1838 from Thomas J. Casper who had received title that same year from the heirs of another Henry Kiger. In his will dated 1806 Henry Kiger left the property to his wife Barbara during her life and then to his sons Henry and Matthias. This is as far as the title goes in Salem County.

A search at Trenton shows three wills in which a Henry Kiger is named; only one of these bears the address Mannington Township; this is the will of Symen dated March 15, 1787 in which he bequeaths his estate to Matthias, Mary, and Catherine Kiger, naming as executor his brother Henry who may be the one mentioned above in the will of 1806.

In the American Catholic Historical Society in Philadelphia there are the original records of the first Catholic church in that city, Old Saint Josephs, Willings Alley. In these there is a mention of the Kigers. "The Fathers of Saint Josephs traveled far and near to say Mass and give sacraments; they visited Matthew Geiger's House (in New Jersey) March 15, 1759, and Adam Geiger's House (in New Jersey) January 2, 1760." The other two wills in Trenton in which a

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Henry Kiger is mentioned concern an Adam Kieger of Pilesgrove dated 1759. Just a short distance from the house is Major's run which divides Pilesgrove township from Mannington. The spelling in the last case corresponds with that given in the records of Saint Josephs. The Fathers of Saint Josephs probably visited all of these houses; it may be that Adam Geiger and Adam Keiger are the same person, and it is also possible that Matthew Geiger and Matthias Geiger are the same. Sickler in his History of Salem County writes that Fathers Schneider and Farmer held mass in Salem county in June 1744 at Matthew and Adam Kiger's on the banks of Salem Creek midway between Courses Landing and Sharptown. This refers to the house of the survey. We have found no evidence to support this early date or to definitely prove that the house in question is the one visited.

Bibliography:

Sickler, Joseph S. The History of Salem County, New Jersey Salem, Sunbeam Publishing Company, n.d. (c 1937)

A search of Salem County court records by Mary N. Mifflin, Salem County Office

A search of records in the Secretary of State's Office by Robert M. Falcey, Mercer County Office

An examination of the records of the American Catholic Historic Society, 715 Spruce Street, Philadelphia

Walter E. Rault
Supervising Historian